



The Conservation Angler Supports HB 3086 and the Dash 1 Amendments

The Conservation Angler is a wild fish and river science and advocacy organization and we work extensively with the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission.

The Conservation Angler supports the current overall structure of the Commission and supports retaining the current composition that represents Oregonians proportionately. TCA is opposed to what is being described as the base bill - HB 3086 - which would result in a wholesale restructuring of the Fish and Wildlife Commission. However, it's possible the -1 amendments could pose a reasonable compromise. Redistricting – and the addition of a sixth congressional district – requires the legislature to amend the establishing language in ORS 496.090 accordingly. Without changes, the Commission will be out of compliance with existing law.

The Conservation Angler advocates maintaining the existing model based on proportional representation to ensure that the public interest in fish, wildlife, and habitat will be represented and so Oregon's Governor will have a large and diverse candidate pool reflecting Oregon's rapidly changing demographics.

Using Water Basins may be good for water resources because water does not often climb up and over a mountain pass and enter another watershed like an elk or a wolverine or a pintail. The Oregon Fish & Wildlife Commission deals with fish and wildlife that migrate across, through and over watershed boundaries.

Which is why each FW Commissioner represents the entirety of the public interest which makes proportionate representation the right model as has been in law since the 1970s.

The new Congressional District requires a revision of the current configuration – it is not “broken” but needs an adjustment.

In our opinion, The Conservation Angler believes that SB 890 - a bill revising the Parks Commission membership based on the new Congressional District map - presents a sound and simple fix.

SB 890 awaits referral in the Oregon House as it passed the Senate 25-4. It makes sense that the Senate take the lead on these legislative issues since they are the Oregon Legislative body charged with vetting and ratifying the Governor's nominees to a host of Boards and Commissions.

The right course on this issue is to ensure the F&W Commission is constituted to match the 6th Congressional District, and to maintain the proportional representation of this Commission - in which each Commissioner is statutorily mandated to represent not a specific region or landscape - but to represent the public interest of all Oregonians.

We also recommend simplifying the qualifying language for the Commission to attract a broader and more diverse range of backgrounds and experiences. Specifically, we believe candidates should have natural resources backgrounds and recommend retaining the language requiring general knowledge of fish, wildlife and habitat

issues. However, listing out or requiring specific backgrounds may unintentionally exclude some stakeholder groups and constrict the pool of interested and qualified candidates.

The Commission is not meant to be comprised of regional experts – but be a Board with statewide presence, experience and expertise. The Commission should be a voice for all Oregonians in overseeing the agency and making policy in accordance with state law.

The Conservation Angler cannot support a model – like the one proposed in HB 3086 – that would dilute the voices of the majority of Oregonians and likely reduce diversity on the Commission. Proportional representation based on people – not land base or industry sector – is the only way to ensure the public interest is served.

Updating the Commission’s statutory structure has given rise to other issues beyond defining representation, and include:

1. Commission member qualifications,
2. State Wildlife Policy set forth in ORS 496.012
3. Relationship between the Commission and Tribal Nations

The reason there is the wide diversity of opinions for the Fish and Wildlife Commission restructuring bill is that many different stakeholders have a wide range of views about the Fish and Wildlife Commission work and constitution.

TCA does not believe that the 2023 Session is the right place to raise and resolve the multiple visions that stakeholders have for the F&W Commission.

This Committee should authorize a funded work group directed to meet in the interim to try to solve the myriad of other issues that this restructuring has kicked off - the 2023 Session does not have the time nor the bandwidth to properly resolve the complex issues being brought forward.

We urge a simple fix to be compliant - with SB 890 as the pathway - and a funded workgroup to address the other issues "the Oregon Way" under the skilled and watchful eyes of the Oregon Consensus Center or like entity.

TCA supports adoption of HB 3086-1. We could possibly support HB 3086-3 – but only if it is possible to learn just what problem that the language regarding Tribal relations was intended to fix. Recently adopted agreements between several tribes and the Fish and Wildlife Commission indicate that these relations are on solid ground.

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Tout ce qui est impossible reste à accomplir. ~ Jules Verne
All that is impossible remains to be accomplished.